

Amendments to the Claims:

This listing of claims replaces all prior versions and listings of claims in the application:

Listing of Claims:

1. (Currently Amended) A process for producing a ~~high-purity~~ trialkanolamine ~~excelling in hue and~~ having an APHA of not more than 40, comprising:

~~a step of~~ producing a mixed alkanolamine by (1) a reaction of an alkylene oxide with liquid ammonia in the presence of a zeolite catalyst or by the (2) a reaction of an alkylene oxide with liquid ammonia in the presence of the a zeolite catalyst and a reaction of an alkylene oxide with aqueous ammonia;

~~a step of removal of a low-boiling substance for removing unreacted ammonia, water, a monoalkanolamine, and a dialkanolamine from the mixed alkanolamine~~ to obtain a mixture deprived of low-boiling substances;

~~a step of removing a high-boiling substance, which have has a boiling point more higher than that of the trialkanolamine, by subjecting the product~~ mixture deprived of the low-boiling substances to vacuum distillation to obtain a distillate; and

~~a step of~~ redistilling the distillate obtained by the vacuum distillation.

2. (Original) A process according to claim 1, wherein the unreacted ammonia is removed by means of a pressure distillation and/or nitrogen gas bubbling.

3. (Original) A process according to claim 1, wherein the water, the monoalkanolamine, and the dialkanolamine are removed continuously or batchwise by a vacuum distillation, respectively.

4. (Original) A process according to claim 1, wherein the redistillation is performed batchwise.

5. (Currently Amended) A process according to claim 1, wherein the redistillation is performed using a distillation column ~~of empty~~ without a filler.

6. (Currently Amended) A process according to claim 5, wherein a distillate obtained by the redistillation is ~~classified~~ grouped into an initial fraction, an intermediate fraction, and a post fraction, and the intermediate fraction is ~~gathered~~ collected as a trialkanolamine product.

7. (Original) A process according to claim 6, wherein the distillate is analyzed continuously or intermittently using an analyzer.

8. (Original) A process according to claim 1, wherein the reaction requires at least part of the mixed alkanolamine to be recycled.

9. (Original) A process according to claim 1, wherein the mixed alkanolamine comprises a mono-, di-, and tri-alkanolamine.

10. (Currently Amended) A process according to claim 1, wherein the trialkanolamine is triethanolamine, the alkylene oxide is ethylene oxide, the alkanolamine is ethanol amine, the monoalkanolamine is monoethanolamine, and the dialkanolamine is diethanolamine.

11. (Currently Amended) A process for refining a trialkanolamine from a mixed alkanolamine obtained by a reaction of an alkylene oxide with ammonia, comprising:

~~a step of~~ removing unreacted ammonia, water, a monoalkanolamine, and a dialkanolamine from the mixed alkanolamine by fraction distillation to form a raw material trialkanolamine;

~~a step of~~ adding to the raw material trialkanolamine a low-boiling compound having a boiling point less than that of the trialkanolamine prior to distillation; and

~~a step of~~ distilling the resultant trialkanolamine.

12. (Original) A process according to claim 11, wherein the low-boiling compound is at least one selected from the group consisting of water; alcohols; ketones; esters; diols; and halogenated hydrocarbons.

13. (Currently Amended) A process according to claim 12, wherein the low-boiling compound is at least one selected from the group consisting of water; ethanol, methanol, propyl alcohol, isopropyl alcohol, butyl alcohol, and t-butyl alcohol; acetone, and methylethylketone; ethylene glycol monoacetate, and ethylene glycol monoethyl ether acetate; monoethylene glycol, and diethylene glycol; and carbon tetrachloride.

14. (Original) A process according to claim 13, wherein the low-boiling compound is at least one selected from the group consisting of water, the monoalkanolamine, and mixtures thereof.

15. (Original) A process according to claim 11, wherein the unreacted ammonia is removed by means of a pressure distillation and/or nitrogen gas bubbling.

16. (Original) A process according to claim 11, wherein the water, the monoalkanolamine, and the dialkanolamine are removed continuously or batchwise by a vacuum distillation, respectively.

17. (Currently Amended) A process according to claim 11, wherein the mixed alkanolamine is obtained by ~~a process for producing a mixed alkanolamine by~~ (1) a reaction of an alkylene oxide with liquid ammonia in the presence of a zeolite catalyst or ~~by the~~ (2) a reaction of an alkylene oxide with liquid ammonia in the presence of ~~the~~ a zeolite catalyst and a reaction of an alkylene oxide with aqueous ammonia.

18. (Original) A process according to claim 11, wherein the mixed alkanolamine comprises a mono-, di-, and tri-alkanolamine.

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Serial No. : 10/770,297  
Filed : February 2, 2004  
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Attorney's Docket No.: 08917-094001 / F 04-004-US

19. (Currently Amended) A process according to claim 1, wherein the trialkanolamine is triethanolamine, the alkylene oxide is ethylene oxide, the alkanolamine is ethanol amine, the monoalkanolamine is monoethanolamine, and the dialkanolamine is diethanolamine.